

Wimborne and Cranborne Rural District Council.Medical Officer's Report for the year 1940.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Wimborne and Cranborne Rural District Council.

The Minister of Health has directed that the sanitary report for the year 1940 shall, as for 1939, be abbreviated and confined to essential and urgent matters, especially those arising from the war and exceptional administrative measures. Statistics are to be preserved but not included in this interim report.

The population of the District was throughout the year swollen by evacuees, both private and Government aided, by the families of soldiers and by troops themselves.

The sanitary arrangements of the District, though in some cases strained, adequately met the extra requirements.

There was no unusual prevalence of epidemic or other diseases but there was a recrudescence of the localised outbreak of diphtheria which I mentioned in my last annual report at Gussage St. Michael, Cashmoor and Woodyates. I have already made a special report on this outbreak to the Council. Though consisting of only 17 cases of diphtheria it was of unusual virulence and was remarkable in that adults were mainly affected. This I attributed to the fact that the school children had nearly all been immunised about six months before. The source of infection proved to be a single virulent carrier, a boy attending Gussage St. Michael School. When he was discovered and isolated the epidemic promptly ceased. Though the children who came in contact with him at the school did not themselves get diphtheria they did carry the infection home and give it to their unimmunised parents and relatives. The course of the epidemic yielded other striking instances of the efficacy of immunisation.

During 1940 the Council carried on its campaign of immunisation against diphtheria started in 1939. I have made a previous report on this. I estimate that up to the end of 1940 51 per cent of the school children had been immunised and 5 per cent of the children aged from 1 to 5.

The Council's schemes for improvement of housing performance remained in abeyance. Cessation of all new building and some deterioration of existing houses have been unavoidable.

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